

March 27, 2011  
Sermon for the Third Sunday in Lent  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
Exodus 17:1-7

*J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus*

Exodus 17:1-7 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup> Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” <sup>3</sup> But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” <sup>4</sup> So Moses cried to the LORD, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” <sup>5</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup> Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup> And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD among us or not?”

1

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible : English Standard Version.* Wheaton : Standard Bible Society, 2001

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Amen.

As you may have learned over the years, God's people are not immune to being stricken with complaining to or about God or His leaders. Though the complaining can indicate a lack of trust in God and His Word, God graciously comes to His people in His Word, baptism and Holy Supper to pour out life and salvation which was earned by His dear Son...who was stricken for us.

God's people in the Old Testament were stricken, and God graciously delivered them. Many people in the world, even many Christians in the world, wonder why we look at and study the Old Testament. Some say it is a holdover from our Lutheran heritage as Dr. Martin Luther was an Old Testament scholar, but brother Martin looked at the OT through New Testament eyes, as though through the cross. As we continue on this morning, I think we will see that indeed, this rock that cleft for Moses and Israelites so that they could have life giving water, represented the Rock that cleft for the Samaritan woman in our Gospel for today.

Earlier in Exodus 15, the Israelites had come across bitter water at Marah. They grumbled, saying "What shall we drink" and God told Moses what to do and God turned the water sweet because they did as they were told. God went on to say, *"If you will diligently listen to the voice of the LORD your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you that I put on the Egyptians, for I*

*am the LORD, your healer.*” God protected them as they traveled and next we are told that:… they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they encamped there by the water. (Exodus 15:26-27)

OK, listen to God, do what He says, all will be just fine. No worries. But then we reach our text for today. They travel and camp at Rephidim… and no water was to be found. But remember, God said that He would be taking care of them. He did at Marah, He did at Elim, He gave them bread from Heaven in the morning and quail meat in the evening in the wilderness of Sin. Pretty Good living. Food and drink provided, every day. And still they grumbled. Still they worried.

How quickly they forget… how quickly we forget. The Israelites cut loose on Moses again. Probably quietly at first, but then the quarreling and grumbling amongst themselves got loud and unruly and it was carried to Moses. Moses identified their grumbling for what it was and He called a spade a spade saying, “Why do you test the LORD?” And that same old tired argument comes up from those that supposedly trusted in the LORD. “*Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?*” (Exodus 17:3b)

Moses finally throws up his hands and cries out to the LORD saying, “*What shall I do with this people?*”, which is where he should have gone in the first place. As we saw earlier, God had delivered them time after time already and as soon as their canteens were empty, the worry and complaints began. God was with them. They could see the cloud, they saw the manna, they had seen water provided before, what is with these people?

Well... it's easy for us to say. We are stricken too, and how often do we grumble? We have things that are beyond our control. Bad weather, gas prices, car trouble, lost jobs, sickness. Not enough rain we grumble, too much rain we grumble...where are you, God?

And then there is our own sinful natures. We rebel against God because we have things we want to do...and His ways seem to cramp our style. We go against God, get ourselves in trouble because we don't follow His ways and then what? Do we repent and change? No, we grumble all the more, we complain and test the LORD. "Please get me out of this mess...so I can try something else all on my own." We still think we can somehow work without Him.

Yet, even still, God delivers us.

Christ was there when the rock was struck at Horeb (1 Cor 10:4) Paul tells us that Christ was the Rock that was cleft... and life giving water was supplied. Isaiah and Zechariah both prophesied that Jesus would be stricken.

(Is. 50:6, 53:4,7; Zech 13:7)

Jesus Himself foretold the same thing in Matthew (20:19; 26:31), Mark (14:27) and Luke (18:33). And He doesn't complain, quarrel or try to attack as those He saved tend to do.

He was stricken for you. When He was stabbed with the spear, water and blood poured forth...and it still flows today. The water flows forth in Holy Baptism, washing our sins away. We have only one physical baptism, but it renews us each day. As Paul told the Ephesians, he tells us,

*“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift.” (Ephesians 4:4-7)*

That grace flows in the waters of Baptism and it flows in the body and blood of Holy Communion given and shed for the forgiveness of our sins.

Our thirst for righteousness is filled by Christ. Not just until our canteens run dry but unto life everlasting. Freely given, through no merit or worthiness of our own, from the Rock of Ages that was cleft for all.

Though you are stricken by sin and sufferings, when Christ was stricken, it was for your deliverance. Just as the LORD delivered His people from their afflictions in the wilderness, so He delivers you, as He took them to the cross. Where indeed, Jesus the Rock was cleft for you and you are invited to hide in His righteousness, where through faith in Him, you indeed have life everlasting.

Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!

Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria